

# Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

## 2012 Accomplishment Plan

**Program Title:** Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program

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**Funds Recommended:** \$5,629,000

**Legislative Citation:** ML 2011, Ch. X, Art. X, Sec. X, Subd. X (x): *(to be completed when signed by Governor)*

### Abstract:

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program will be managed by the Department of Natural Resources to provide competitive matching grants to local, regional, state, and national non-profit organizations, including governments.

## Program Narrative

### Design and Scope of Work

The Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL) will be managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to provide competitive matching grants of up to \$400,000 to local, regional, state, and national non-profit organizations, including governments. Grant activities include the enhancement, restoration, or protection of forests, wetlands, prairies, and habitat for fish, game, or wildlife in Minnesota. A 10% match from nonstate sources is required for all grants. Match may be cash or in-kind resources. All match must be identified at the time of application.

CPL Program Staff will develop a Request for Proposal and Program Manual that incorporate the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's (L-SOHC) priorities, solicit applications and work with applicants to submit scorable applications, oversee the grant selection process, prepare and execute grant documents, review expenditure documentation to ensure recipients are only reimbursed for allowable expenses, make reimbursement payments, monitor grant work, assist recipients with closing out their agreements, and prepare reports as required by the L-SOHC.

MS 97a.056 Subd. 3a directed the L-SOHC to establish a conservation partners grant program to encourage and support local conservation efforts. Subsequent session law established additional guidelines and criteria for this program and authorized the DNR to administer it.

Applicants will describe the location of the work (county and ecological subsection), activity type, and habitat in their application. They will also describe the how their actions will benefit habitat and fish, game and wildlife. For acquisition projects, applicants will describe their parcel selection process. All projects must address the priorities in the *Minnesota Statewide Conservation and Preservation Plan*, and *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare*.

Funds for projects under this appropriation will be available until June 30, 2014. If a project involves acquiring land and then restoring or enhancing all or part of that land, the funds for restoration and enhancement will be available until June 30, 2016, or for four years after the acquisition (whichever is later), in order to complete restoration and enhancement work. If a project receives federal funding, the time period of the appropriation will be extended to equal the availability of federal funding.

In administering this program the DNR will comply with the Department of Administration - Office of Grants Management policies.

Stakeholders are involved in this proposal as applicants or reviewers (if no conflict of interest exists). There is no known stakeholder opposition to this program.

#### **Grant Application Process**

A Request for Proposal (RFP) and Program Manual (PM) will be posted on the CPL website in early August, 2011. These documents will contain grant program information, application requirements and scoring criteria, grant reporting requirements, and state agency contacts. The RFP, PM, and all grant agreements will incorporate appropriate principles and criteria from the L-SOHC's *Call for Funding Requests – 2012 Appropriations* and associated legislation.

CPL Program Staff will explore ways to reduce any real or perceived barriers in the application process. This includes a survey(s) and/or discussion groups involving previous applicants and applicants to similar grant programs, and exploring the use of a pre-application system. The results will be incorporated into the FY12 application process.

Applications must be submitted electronically using CPL's Online Grant Application System (OLGA). All project sites must be mapped using OLGA's mapping tool. OLGA will accept applications beginning in August, 2011, until the deadline for the first round of grants in mid-September, 2011. The application system will not accept applications during the review process.

Grants will be selected for funding up to twice a year. Any ungranted funds from the first cycle will be available for use in a following cycle, or may be distributed to current grantees to assist approved projects. DNR reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with DNR and Outdoor Heritage Fund policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available or if a grantee cannot carry out their project as planned.

#### **Grant Selection Process**

CPL Grant Program Staff will review applications to make sure they are complete and meet grant program requirements. Technical Review Committee(s), selected by the Commissioner of Natural Resources, will review and score applications based on criteria established by the L-SOHC, MN State Legislature, and DNR. These committees may include representatives from DNR, BWSR, the University

of MN, state universities or private colleges, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other appropriate members from government, non-profit organizations, and private businesses. A final ranking committee made up of the Chief Financial Officer, and Directors of the DNR Divisions of Fish and Wildlife, Ecological Resources/Waters, and Forestry will consider TRC, Division and Regional DNR comments, and recommend projects and funding levels to the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The Commissioner will make the final decision on the projects funded and funding levels. Projects may be fully or partially funded.

Every effort will be made to evenly distribute the selected grants by geographic location, activity, and funding level, with an objective of granting 50% of the funds to projects above \$125,000, and 50% of the funds to projects below \$125,000.

CPL Grant Program staff will work with grantees to ensure financial reviews, grant agreements, and any other necessary paperwork are completed. Work may not begin until the grant is executed.

### **Project Reviews and Reporting**

Project reviews will be completed as required by Office of Grants Management Policy 08-10, [Grant Monitoring](#).

Grantees will submit annual accomplishment reports on forms provided by CPL staff, based on L-SOHC report forms. Reports must account for the use of grant and match funds, and outcomes in measures of wetlands, prairies, forests, and fish, game, and wildlife habitat restored, enhanced, and protected. The report must include an evaluation of these results. A final report will be required by all grantees 30 days after the project is complete.

CPL Grant Program staff will submit accomplishment reports to the L-SOHC as required. Accomplishment information will also be posted on the CPL website.

### **CPL Administration Budget**

Grant administration costs will be billed using actual costs. These costs include salary and fringe for grants staff, direct support services, travel, supplies, and expense. An internal Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be developed with DNR's Management Information Systems to update and manage the online grant application system.

The addition of 1.1 FTE will bring CPL Program Staff up to 2.5 FTEs. The additional FTE is necessary to properly manage three years of appropriations (FY10, FY11, and FY12). By March 2011 it is estimated there will be 60 active grants to manage from FY10 and FY11, with an unknown number of FY12 grants yet to be awarded. Funds are included to cover the direct costs of hiring the new FTE, a computer, and other start-up costs.

While much of the foundation for the CPL program has been laid (processes, web pages, application system, forms and documents, etc.), the program workload increases as grant projects get underway. New activities such as project monitoring, payment requests, grantee reports, document reviews, grant closeouts, and work with internal and external auditors are required even as ongoing activities such as grantee coaching and accomplishment reports to the L-SOHC continue. The addition of 1.1 FTEs will allow for the new activities to occur while continuing existing work.

### **DNR Land Acquisition Costs**

Grantees will be required to budget for DNR Land Acquisition costs that are necessary to support the land acquisition process for parcels to be conveyed to the DNR. These costs will be billed to the grantees on a professional services basis and may be paid with either grant or match funds.

### **DNR Technical Support**

The Division of Fish and Wildlife estimates it will provide \$70,000 of ongoing technical guidance from Division field staff. This technical guidance will help grantees meet requirements for working on state lands.

### **Grantee Match**

Grantees will be required to provide a 10% match from nonstate sources. Match may be cash or in-kind resources.

## **Planning**

This program will provide additional funds to enhance, restore, and protect habitat in Minnesota. All published resource management and species plans—including the Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan—recognize that habitat is critical for the success of Minnesota’s fish and wildlife species. Lack of funding is consistently listed in many plans as one of the largest issues limiting the amount of habitat work and protection that is completed each year.

In the *Minnesota Conservation and Preservation Plan*, habitat restoration, enhancement and protection is specified in the following priorities:

- H1: Protect priority land habitats (pg 63)
- H2: Protect critical shorelands of streams and lakes (pg 67)
- H4: Restore and protect shallow lakes (pg 78)
- H5: Restore land, wetlands, and associated wetlands (pg 80)
- H7: Keep water on the landscape (pg 84)
- LU 8: Protect large blocks of forested land (pg 130)
- L10: Support and expand sustainable practices on working forested lands (pg 131)

Other plans that list habitat restoration, enhancement and protection as priorities include:

- *Tomorrow's Habitat for the Wild and Rare* (Minnesota’s Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy), which identifies habitat loss and degradation as the primary problem facing species in greatest conservation need in Minnesota.
- The *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* Strategies #1 and 2.
- The DNR’s Division of Fish and Wildlife has several key plans identifying acquisition and habitat goals for fish and wildlife populations. Habitat goals are also addressed through more focused plans and programs that can be found on the DNR’s website.
- National plans include the *North American Wetland Management Plan*, various Joint Venture Plans, *National Fish Habitat Initiative*, and all the *Bird Conservation Plans*.
- Non-governmental conservation agencies such as Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and Audubon Minnesota have developed their own conservation plans that list habitat restoration, enhancement and protection as a priority.

Grantees will be asked to answer these same questions in their application, and describe how their project addresses priorities and requirements set out in the L-SOHC's section priorities.

### Relationship to Other Constitutional Funds

The CPL Grant Program will complement other programs and projects supported with constitutional funds by allowing organizations to access Outdoor Heritage Funds for smaller, local projects.

### Relationship to Current Organizational Budget

In FY10, DNR received \$4 million for grants and administration of this program. These were new funds for a new program and did not supplant existing funds. In FY11, DNR received \$4,386,000 for grants and administration to continue the CPL program. These funds also did not supplant existing funds.

This program funding is of reasonable size given the scale of DNR's recent fiscal year expenditures. Though Outdoor Heritage Funds will be spread out over multiple years, below are approximate Fiscal Year 2009 expenditures (not including bonding) as an example of what DNR spends in a given year:

All DNR expenditures - \$200 million  
Ecological Resources Division - \$11.6 million  
Fish and Wildlife Division - \$33.1 million  
Forestry Division - \$25.5 million  
Waters Division - \$33.4 million

Applicants will be asked to document the impact of L-SOHC grant funds to their current budget in their grant application, and if these funds will supplement or supplant existing funds.

### Sustainability and Maintenance

Applicants will be required to describe how project outcomes will be sustained after the period of funding has ended, including costs, schedules, source of funding, and who will be responsible for the work. Stewardship plans must identify the sources and amount of funding for monitoring and identify the parties responsible for monitoring and enforcing the easement agreement.

### Accomplishment Timeline

Activity	Milestone	Date
Solicit and select grant applications	RFP and PM posted online	Aug 2011
	First round applications due	Mid-Sept 2011
	First round FY 11 grantees announced	Mid-Nov 2011
	First round grants encumbered	Feb 2012
Grantees start work	First round grants executed	March 2012
Solicit and select second round grant applications (if necessary)	Second round applications due	Feb 2012
	Second round FY 11 grantees announced	May 2012
	Second round grants encumbered	June 2012
Grantees start work	Second round grants executed	June 2012
Grant monitoring starts	Per OGM policy	April 2012
Annual Grantee reports due	Reports received	Sept of each

		year
Program report to Council	Report submitted	Aug and Feb of each year

Attachments (*on spreadsheet workbook – 3 separate tabs*):

- A. Budget
- B. Proposed Outcome Tables  
Grantees will provide this information
- C. Parcel List  
Grantees will provide this information

# Attachment A. Budget Spreadsheet

Name of Proposal:	Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program
Date:	11/4/2010
Legal Citation / Proposal Number:	X-02

[Link Here to definitions of the budget items below.](#)

**Total Amount of Request** \$ **5,629,000** *From page 1 on the funding form.*

## Personnel

Position breakdown here	FTE	Over # of years	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
<i>Grant Coordinator</i>	0.5	2	\$ 71,000		\$	71,000
<i>Grant Spec Intermed</i>	1	2	\$ 104,000		\$	104,000
<i>Grant Spec Intermed</i>	1	2	\$ 104,000		\$	104,000
<i>position 4</i>					\$	-
<i>position 5</i>					\$	-
<i>position 6</i>					\$	-
<i>position 7</i>					\$	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.5</b>		\$ 279,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 279,000

## Budget and Cash Leverage *(All your LSOHC Request Funds must be direct to and necessary for program outcomes.)*

Please describe how you intend to spend the requested funds.

Budget Item	LSOHC Request	Anticipated Cash Leverage	Cash Leverage Source	Total
Personnel - <i>auto entered from above</i>	\$ 279,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 279,000
Contracts	\$ 5,321,500	\$ 531,000		\$ 5,852,500
Fee Acquisition w/ PILT <i>(breakout in table 6 &amp; 7)</i>			\$ -	-
Fee Acquisition w/o PILT <i>(breakout in table 6 &amp; 7)</i>			\$ -	-
Easement Acquisition			\$ -	-
Easement Stewardship			\$ -	-
Travel (in-state)	\$ 13,000		\$	13,000
Professional Services			\$ -	-
DNR Direct Support Services <i>(DNR programs only)</i>	\$ 12,000		\$	12,000
DNR Land Acquisition Costs			\$ -	-
Other			\$ -	-
Capital Equipment <i>(auto entered from below)</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$	-
Other Equipment/Tools	\$ 2,000		\$	2,000
Supplies/Materials	\$ 1,500		\$	1,500
	\$ 5,629,000	\$ 531,000	\$ -	\$ 6,156,500

## Capital Equipment *(single items over \$10,000 - auto entered into table above)*

Item Name	LSOHC Request	Leverage
<i>Item 1 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 2 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 3 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 4 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 5 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 6 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 7 enter here</i>		
<i>Item 8 enter here</i>		
<b>Total</b>	0	0